

REMARKS

Applicant acknowledges the examiner interview of February 24, 2004 with Examiners Meky and Todd and appreciates the opportunity to discuss the final Office Action and the subject patent application. At the interview, agreement was reached with respect to amendments to the claims. The substance of the discussions during the interview are set forth herein.

Claims 1, 2, and 4-20 remain in this application. Entry of the present amendments, which were agreed upon at the examiner interview to put the application in condition for allowance, is respectfully requested. Claims 21-66, which were withdrawn from consideration in the Office Action for a non-elected invention, have been cancelled. In accordance with the agreement reached with the examiners, amendments have been made to independent claims 1, 17, 19, and 20 to explicitly state that which would have been understood by one of ordinary skill in the art from language of claim 1 before such an amendment. In addition, claims 17, 19, and 20 have been amended for the purpose of consistency with the subject matter towards which claim 1 is directed.

Claims 1, 2, 4-20 are rejected in the Office Action under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Jiang (U.S. Patent No. 6,167,432). As discussed in detail below, claims 1, 2, 4-20 are not anticipated by Jiang because all the features of claims 1, 2, 4-20 are not shown or suggested by Jiang. Applicants therefore respectfully traverse this rejection.

Independent claim 1 is not anticipated or obvious in view of Jiang because Jiang does not show or suggest, at least, three features of the system defined by claim 1. Jiang does not show or suggest: (1) a transmitter for sending information about the existence of a dedicated site to secondary users that is nominated by the primary user ("Transmitter Feature"); (2) sharing of data in a collaborative workspace in accordance with a hierarchy ("Hierarchy Feature"); and (3) sharing of data through the dedicated site ("Centralized Feature").

With respect to the Transmitter Feature, independent claim 1 recites:

"a transmitter for sending information about the existence of said dedicated site to said at least one secondary user nominated by said primary user;" (emphasis added).

In the Office Action, reliance is placed on the following text from Jiang in connection with the above-quoted section of claim 1:

"[t]he IP addresses of the conference participants are maintained at the designated site and are transmitted to a new conference participant to allow the new conference participant to connect directly into the conference without the new participant having to know the IP addresses of the conference participants. The new participant may be connected to any one of the existing conference participants. Once the conference is established, no data goes through the designated site or a central host. Data packets are directly sent to and received by the respective application program of each participant.."

The rejection relies on the transmission of an IP address, as quoted in the above text from Jiang, to show the Transmitter Feature of claim 1. However, support for this assertion appears to be lacking. The system in Jiang describes that an IP address is sent to a user when the user selects to join a conference that the user selected from a list of conferences on a web page that the user accessed. The system of claim 1 sends the information about the existence of the dedicated site to a secondary user that is nominated by the primary user. As such, the system in claim 1 includes a feature in which the primary user nominates one or more secondary users and the system sends information about the existence of the dedicated site to those nominated secondary users. The sending of an IP address in Jiang, which occurs when users on their volition join a conference of interest, does not show such functionality. Accordingly, the Transmitter Feature of claim 1 is not shown or suggested by Jiang.

With respect to the Hierarchy Feature, claim 1 now explicitly recites:

"A system for providing a collaborative workspace for sharing data, comprising . . . a communicator for transmitting data . . . said shared data being shared through said dedicated site in accordance with [a] hierarchy between said users." (emphasis added)

The system of claim 1, thus, contemplates a sharing of data in the collaborative workspace that is in accordance with an established hierarchy. Although Jiang describes that a conference can be established by what is referred to as a "chairperson," Jiang, however, does not describe that conference participants or the contents of a conference are treated any differently within a conference. Accordingly, the Hierarchy Feature of claim 1 is not shown or suggested by Jiang.

With respect to the Centralized Feature, claim 1 indicates that the data shared in the collaborative space is shared through a dedicated site. Jiang is directed to a

peer-to-peer approach, which is entirely different from the Centralized Feature of claim 1. Such an approach is not only different from the Centralized Feature, but also teaches away from the Centralized Feature of claim 1. For example, Jiang specifically states that "[o]nce the conference is established, no data goes through the designated site or a central host," which is inconsistent with the Centralized Feature mentioned above. Accordingly, the Centralized Feature of claim 1 is not anticipated or obvious in view of Jiang.

Claims 2 and 4-16 which depend from claim 1 are allowable at least for the reasons set forth above regarding claim 1.

As mentioned above, independent claims 17, 19, and 20 have been amended based on the agreement reached with the examiners. The additional amendments to claims 17, 19, and 20 have been made to add language directed towards the Hierarchy Feature for consistency with earlier claims. As a result, independent claims 17, 19, and 20, as in claim 1, include features that are directed towards the Transmitter, Hierarchy, and Centralized features. As such, claims 17, 19, and 20 are allowable over Jiang on the same grounds as were discussed above in connection with claim 1. Moreover, claims 19 and 20 include a feature for looking up an address of said secondary user from an address database, which Jiang does not show or suggest to be part of the system disclosed therein.

Claim 18, which depends from claim 17, is allowable at least for the reasons set forth above regarding claim 17. Additionally, the dependent claims recite further features not disclosed or known in the prior art, particularly when considered in combination with the unique features of claims 1 or 17.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicant submits that all of the claims are patentable over the cited art and respectfully requests reconsideration and an early indication of allowance. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned if any additional information is required.

Respectfully submitted,



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